

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/535,596	ISHIDA ET AL.
	Examiner Gary D. Harris	Art Unit 1773

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTO-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to _____.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1 and 3.
3. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, see Page 3 -8 filed 4/16/07 with respect to a gland packing material produced by a water swelling mineral more specifically water swelling mica, have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of Claims 1 & 3 has been withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1 & 3 are allowed.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The specified gland packing produced by a water-swelling mineral (mica) is not suggested by prior art.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art supplied by applicant teaches that substances generally known as flake structures include mica and graphite, in addition to vermiculite. A known method carried out to expand these substances in a flake-like manner comprises, for instance, impregnating chemicals in between the flakes thereof and heating to a temperature at which decomposition of the chemicals takes place, thereby obtaining an expansion force sufficient to cause separation of the flakes from each other US

4,477,094 (Col. 5, Line 52-60). These materials are used primarily as gaskets. It would not be obvious to use a gland packing base material with amount of sticking equal to or larger than $0.01\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$.

Hoyes et al. ('276) discloses exfoliated vermiculite tape and packing for repair, whereas applicant teaches packing for long-term use. The applicants packing material exhibits a thixotropic property where by sliding and shear resistance expand the mineral allowing adherence (sticking) to the gland packing base.

Ishida US 7,011,312 discusses solid lubricants to include mica (Col. 11, Line 45-50). Ishida '312 does not discuss the use of expanded mica as a gland packing material.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gary D. Harris whose telephone number is 571-272-6508. The examiner can normally be reached on 8AM - 5PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carol D. Chaney can be reached on 571-272-1284. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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**CAROL CHANEY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER**